

THE BOBSLEDDER'S JACKET by Tim Myers PART ONE For as long as he could remember, Jack had dreamed of being in the Olympics. Athletes from all over the world were gathering to march into the Olympic stadium. "Japanese soldiers notice things like that. They'll probably laugh at us. Jack didn't answer. Bill's father had been killed by Japanese soldiers in the island battles of World War II. Jack knew Bill felt uneasy about being in Japan. Suddenly a little Japanese girl came up to Jack and pointed right at the tear in his sleeve. Jack smiled at her, not knowing what to do. So he said, "Uh ... Ohayo ... Good morning!" "She wants to try it on. Sure, kid – here you go." He slipped off the jacket and gave it to the girl. She took it and bowed. He bowed too. But when he raised his head again, she was running off with his jacket! he cried. Bill shouted. Jack ran a few steps after her, but in an instant she'd disappeared along the crowded street. "I'm telling you, Jack – you can't trust these people!" Now he and his partners were in Sapporo, Japan, for the Winter Olympics – as the American bobsled team! For years he'd worked hard to become a good bobsledder, training and practicing, always getting better. The sleeve of Jack's Olympic jacket had been torn. She kept speaking words that he couldn't understand and pointing to his torn sleeve. "Don't hold your breath, Jack," another bobsledder said. "You're with us – everyone can see that. I just wish I could get my hands on that kid." Suddenly Jack felt a tugging, this time on his shirt sleeve. The long rip in the sleeve was gone. It had been sewn so perfectly that he couldn't even see the thread. She smiled at him, and at Jack, and bowed again. "They'll notice it," said Bill. The little girl said ohayo back to him – and a lot more. Jack looked at his friends and shrugged. "She's stealing it!" Bill said in a loud voice, his eyes blazing. One of the other bobsledders said. "It's okay buddy," he said. Jack burst out, and he put his hands on her shoulders so she couldn't run off. But she only smiled at him. He had to hold it up close to see the stitches. "She didn't steal it! She took it to be fixed!" Everything was perfect – well, almost everything. "Hey!"